The sectarian iceberg?

Michael Rosie

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Abstract:

This article situates the contemporary evidential position on Scotland's sectarianism within some longer-term and ongoing debates. It does so by addressing three key aspects of sectarianism in Scotland. Firstly it explores long-standing concerns about sectarianism in Scotland, and the puzzle that sectarianism frequently seems to be *someone else's problem.* It then outlines some central evidential claims made about sectarianism in the 1980s and why our increasing knowledge about religion in Scotland's social structure appear to bear them out. Finally, the article concludes by questioning how far we can conceive of 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' as divided in the personal, informal and intimate spheres of contemporary Scottish life.

Keywords: Sectarianism, Social anxiety, social structure, religious intermarriage

About the Author:

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Introduction

Key to the work of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism (AGoTS) was the desire to place robust evidence at the heart of understanding and addressing sectarianism in contemporary Scotland. Three articles in this Special Issue report new and important research commissioned by the Scottish Government on behalf of the Group. These studies were identified as addressing important gaps in existing knowledge around public attitudes towards sectarianism, the impact of sectarianism in local communities, and the possible impacts of marches and parades. It is important, however, to situate this new research within other sources of evidence and debate. In part this will be addressed by the Scottish Government's forthcoming updated review of contemporary evidence in this area (Justice Analytical Services, 2015). This article seeks to frame the contemporary evidential position within some of the longer-term and ongoing debates around sectarianism in Scotland.

It is necessary to insert an immediate disclaimer. I write here as an individual academic and as part of the Advisory Group, but by no means on its behalf. The views and conclusions of the Group as a whole can be read in its reports (AGoTS 2013, 2015). It is also necessary to note that the experience and privilege of being a member of the Advisory Group has added immeasurably to my understanding and appreciation of sectarianism in its Scottish context. In previous work I have argued that the notion of a 'Sectarian Scotland' operates as a myth. I concluded: "… Scotland is not a 'sectarian' society, at least when that term is used as [an] analytical concept rather than pejorative description. Scotland is an increasingly secular country where religion does not provide a significant marker of political or social cleavage" (Rosie, 2004: 144). A decade later – in an even more secularised Scotland – I continue to argue that there is very often 'less' sectarianism than meets the eye. However, it has also become very clear that the *perception* of a problem remains widespread, and that people – or some people at least – *act* upon those perceptions. If the work of AGoTS has one positive outcome is should be an encouragement for Scotland to 'open the box': for what is inside may be far less worrying than we fear.

This article, then, will address three key aspects about sectarianism in Scotland. Firstly it explores long-standing concerns about sectarianism in Scotland, and the puzzle that sectarianism frequently seems to be *someone else's problem.* It then outlines some central evidential claims made about sectarianism in the 1980s and why our increasing knowledge about religion in Scotland's social structure appear to bear them out. Finally, the article concludes by questioning how far we can conceive of 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' as divided in the personal, informal and intimate spheres of contemporary Scottish life.

Someone else's problem…

There are two quite distinctive senses in which sectarianism is 'someone else's problem'. First, the common claim that sectarianism is *caused*, initiated, or carried out by someone else. It is striking that few individuals, let alone organisations or groups, will volunteer themselves as being 'sectarian'. Sectarianism becomes an accusation – something *they* do and *we* endure. This is not merely levelled across religion: there has long been a denial of responsibility through the accusation that sectarianism is exclusively the pastime of 'neds' and 'knuckle-draggers'. Religious defensiveness and class snobbery may be intimately intertwined. The second sense of distancing is that sectarianism *happens* to someone else. A variation of this second version is that it doesn't happen around *here* though it happens, and is perhaps common, elsewhere.

The two senses of someone else's problem raise very different challenges for policymakers. The first can denote a refusal to acknowledge sectarianism as a problem in certain circumstances or contexts since such acknowledgement may imply (or be seen to imply) a sense of 'responsibility' or 'blame'. This becomes very difficult for individuals or organisations who insist that the responsibility is not 'theirs' but *someone else's*. In the absence of robust evidence (or even a consensus on what does or does not count as 'sectarian') this can lead to an ever diminishing vicious circle of outright denial and 'what-about-ery'. As Walker (2000: 125) has noted:

> The long-standing difficulties of debating this issue - of penetrating the fog of anecdote, grievance, claim and counterclaim in the absence of much hard evidence - have been

> compounded by a sterile stand-off between demands for acknowledgement of guilt, and irritation about being invited to feel guilty.

The only possible route out of this stand-off is the production of hard evidence, hence the AGoTS insistence that "attention [should be] given to evidence rather than allegation" (2013: 8). The abundance of accusation (and a reluctance of many accusers to be concerned too much about actual evidence) fuels the second, and more sociologically nuanced, sense of this being 'someone else's problem'.

This latter sense exemplifies what might be called a social anxiety over sectarianism, a phenomenon broadly analogous to the more familiar concept of fear of crime (on 'governing' sectarianism see Flint, 2008). In short, this social anxiety operates through a widespread belief that sectarianism is a problem in Scotland, perhaps a serious one demanding attention, alongside the seeming paradox that relatively few people report that they have themselves directly experienced it. In other words, sectarianism is a problem, but not one that happens to *me*. Notably this seeming disjuncture between understandings of sectarianism as a *general issue* as compared to a *personal problem* is a common thread shared by much research into sectarianism in Scotland. Three contributions to this volume touch upon precisely that phenomenon. Ormston et al note that the perceived level of prejudice against both Catholics and Protestants (54 per cent of their respondents felt that there was at least 'some' prejudice against Catholics; 41 per cent that there was at least 'some' prejudice against Protestants) is considerably higher than the proportion in the survey (14 per cent) reporting that they had themselves experienced religious discrimination or exclusion. Likewise, whilst notable minorities felt that it was at least 'quite likely' that someone would be harassed or threatened in Scotland because they were Catholic (35 per cent) or Protestant (39 per cent), rather fewer (9 and 8 per cent respectively) felt that was likely in *their own* local area (see Ormston et al, 2015: xx). Goodall et al report that whilst for some of their respondents "sectarianism is manifestly part of their everyday experience, for others it is almost invisible in their social world" (2015b: xx).Hamilton-Smith et al note the imagined association of both Loyalist and Irish Republic parades with "immediate disorder … [and] broader social anxieties about community cohesion and sectarianism", but found both of these associations "hard to pin down" in practice (2015b: xx).

These two worlds of Scottish sectarianism – general perception and personal experience - were evocatively illuminated by a study for Glasgow City Council which combined focus groups with a representative survey of adult Glaswegians. The research was conducted in 2002 and published in 2003 (NFO Social Research, 2003). Strikingly the research, amongst the most substantial conducted on sectarianism, received no media attention beyond a *Sunday Herald* article emphasising unsubstantiated claims that the study's report was "loaded and skewed": "It is not a true reflection of what was discovered. That's been suppressed" (quoted in Mackay, 2003). Claims of suppression were all the more bizarre since the research report was made, and remains, freely available on the Council website, whilst the study questionnaire, focus group topic guides, and full survey dataset were made available to researchers through the UK Data Archive (Hope & Martin, 2004). Perhaps because of these claims the Glasgow study has remained largely ignored in academic discourse (it is cited in Bruce et al, 2004; and Rosie, 2004, but absent from many other accounts). That is particularly surprising since the results of the Glasgow study neatly preface much of the evidence presented in this Special Issue and are worth exploring.

A key finding of the NFO study was that whilst Glaswegians were confident in reporting that sectarianism, in a variety of forms, was 'common' in their city, they were unlikely to report having encountered it themselves over the previous several years. In other words, the 2002 study illustrated – as does the 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes - a sharp disjuncture between how widespread respondents felt different forms of sectarianism were, and how rarely respondents claimed to have suffered them personally. Table 1 illustrates a consistent pattern across eight different forms of 'sectarianism'. For each, respondents were asked about the extent of the problem, and their own experience of it. Strikingly two-thirds of Glaswegians felt that sectarian violence was a common occurrence in their city (with 22 per cent thinking it *very common*). Yet of the 147 respondents (14 per cent of the survey) who reported that they had themselves been physically attacked over the previous five years – in itself a profoundly depressing statistic - *seven* (less than one per cent) believed that religion had been a contributing factor to the assault. Likewise a majority felt sectarian intimidation or harassment, sectarian threats, and sectarian vandalism were common in Glasgow, yet very few (in each of these cases less than one per cent) reported that they themselves had suffered it over the previous five years. As the Glasgow study noted, there was "a stark contrast between perceptions of prevalence and reports of experience" (NFO Social Research, 2003: 59):

Table 1: Perceptions and Experiences of 'sectarianism' in Glasgow

Form of sectarianism:	**Perception** (% believing 'very' or 'quite common')	**Experience** (% claiming to have suffered in past 5 years)
Employment Discrimination	24	1.1
Different treatment by Council	13	0.5
Different treatment by Police	20	0.3
Different treatment by Public Services	15	0.2
Sectarian violence	65	0.7
Intimidation or harassment	54	0.4
Threats	58	0.8
Vandalism	65	0.6
Base	*1,029*	*1,029*

Source: *NFO 2003:* author's own analysis.

Like fear of crime, anxiety over sectarianism may not simply manifest itself as social unease. Individuals, it would seem likely, will act upon their anxieties in certain contexts. The Glasgow survey allowed us to modestly explore the *effects* of these strong perceptions of sectarianism, although it largely indicates where the effects do not seem to lie. The study asked, for example, whether there were areas of the city that respondents preferred to avoid, and, if so, why. The question was left open, and whilst many respondents named specific streets/territories of the city, others described more general contexts which they would avoid ("anywhere at night alone"; "areas where people are hanging around doing nothing"). A large minority of respondents (N = 391, or 38 per cent) said they avoided specific parts of the city, with around one in eight of these (N = 47) saying that this was because of their religion. In other words, around 5 per cent of the sample avoided certain parts of their own city for reasons connected with their religious identity. This compares to 4 per cent who would avoid certain areas because of where they themselves lived; 5 per cent because of their age; 6 per cent because of their

gender; and 6 per cent because of the football team they support. Whilst these figures are somewhat troubling, it also suggests that the vast majority of Glaswegians do not report such fears. Likewise, few of the 1,029 surveyed reported that their religion gave them grounds for having 'safety concerns' on public transport (n=14); feeling deliberately excluded from a social occasion (n=16); or being uncomfortable in a social situation (n=39). Notably, then, despite the clear perception amongst respondents that sectarianism was widespread in Glasgow, few reported specific experiences of it. When presented with the statement that "sectarianism affects me personally", 12 per cent agreed whilst 69 per cent disagreed.

These results suggested a rather generalised unease or anxiety around sectarianism in Glasgow, rather than entrenched aspects of the city's life and geography which alarmed or worried respondents. This may fit with, for example, Hamilton-Smith et al's account, in this volume, of how some Glasgow spaces assumed a sectarian character only in very particular contexts: "Only at specific moments might certain locations suddenly become laden with meaning and association" (Hamilton-Smith et al, 2015b: XX). Thus someone may not think of avoiding a particular area, street, or bus route due to worries about ethno-religious friction *except* where a specific parade, football match, or other event is, or is thought to be, occurring. The research, therefore, points towards a nuanced, episodic and highly contextual (and perhaps highly personalised) sense of unease around sectarianism. This suggests the need for a policy focus which accentuates, firstly, discussion of when people do or do not feel worried or unsafe and, secondly, reassurance that where unacceptable antisocial or criminal behaviour around sectarianism ensues it will be addressed and, if necessary, punished. This is not simply a matter of *criminalising* sectarianism – though a decade and more of religious hate-crime statistics suggest a continuing (and predominantly male and alcohol-fuelled) reservoir of low-level disruptive and threatening 'conduct derogatory towards' both Catholicism and Protestantism (see McKenna & Skivington, 2014; Rosie 2013). Rather there needs to be a sea change in attitudes on what is, and what is not, acceptable in everyday Scottish life. Such a change appears to be occurring in Scotland (and elsewhere) with regard to racism and to homophobia. There is, though, currently little evidence that Scots are confident that sectarianism can be, or is being, decisively tackled. In 2002 just 15% of Glaswegians agreed that "Sectarianism is becoming a thing of the past" (NFO Social Research, 2003). In 2014 66 per cent of Scots agreed that "sectarianism will always exist in Scotland" (Hinchliffe et al, 2015: 23).

Life Chances: A sectarian iceberg?

Writing more than a quarter of a century ago, in the precursor to this journal, Steve Bruce noted that there was

> … considerable superficial evidence of sectarianism, if by that rather loose journalistic term we mean the aggressive display in the public sphere of religious and ethnic differences which, in modern societies, are supposed to be confined to the private world as matters of 'personal preference'.
> (1988: 151)

Bruce's argument was set against the context of a contemporary (indeed perhaps unprecedented) surge in academic interest in ethno-religious friction in Scotland. Some saw the outward signs of sectarian tension – football rivalry, paramilitary graffiti, and the like – as reflective of wider social divisions. Tom Gallagher, for example, reviewing Bill Murray's (1984) volume on the Celtic-Rangers rivalry, noted that "The hate and hysteria on display at

Old Firm matches does not tumble out of the social void" (Gallagher, 1985:44). Bruce, by sharp contrast, described such sectarian rivalry as "just a boy's game" (1985: 248) and argued that:

> If we adopt the metaphor of an iceberg, I contend that the relatively rare public displays of sectarian animosity are not the visible tip of a submerged mass of ice but are rather all that is left. My critics believe that there is still a sizeable piece of sectarian ice under the surface.
> (1988: 151).

By the late 1980s, therefore, a key parameter of the academic debate was set – how much 'ice' remained unseen? As Bruce noted on the subject of socio-economic opportunity: "What would be illuminating is evidence about the relative fortunes of Protestants and Catholics in West Central Scotland but such data are not presently available." (1988: 155).

Despite the subsequent expansion of robust and accessible data on religion and ethnicity in Scotland – not least the Censuses of 2001 and 2011 – evidence of systematic religious disadvantage (let alone sectarian discrimination) has proved remarkably elusive. Many accounts agree that employment discrimination was fairly widespread in the past, primarily by small, locally owned companies. Fundamental shifts in the labour market from the 1960s onwards reduced the capacity for discrimination as national or international firms, often with centralised and bureaucratised human resources departments, increasingly emphasised meritocratic approaches to staff recruitment and promotion (See, e.g., Paterson & Iannelli, 2006; L. Paterson, 2000a, 2000b; Gallagher, 1987; Bruce, 2000). Such meritocracy – at least in recruitment - is largely based on educational credentials. Research by Lindsay Paterson suggested that "the occupational status of both younger Catholic men and younger Catholic women is now close to that of non-Catholics" (2000a:155). A key vehicle for this convergence, Paterson argued, was Scotland's "system of distinctive and publicly funded Catholic schools" (2000b: 375).Williams & Walls, however, in their interpretation of the same occupational data insisted Catholic disadvantage was "indeed going but it is not yet gone" (2000:247).

In more popular (and populist) discourse there have been persistent claims that a substantial degree of sectarian employment practices (and in many accounts specifically anti-Catholic discrimination) linger. In 1999 composer James MacMillan would claim that "anti-Catholicism [in Scotland], even when it is not particularly malign, is as endemic as it is second nature" (2000:15), provoking a fierce debate in the Scottish press and an edited collection exploring *Scotland's Shame?* (Devine, 2000). That collection spanned a wide range of opinion, but demonstrated the relatively narrow range of (then) available evidence. Some accounts were entirely reliant on hyperbole and anecdote. Take, for example, the contribution of Patrick Reilly which began "To ask if there is anti-Catholicism in Scotland is like asking if there are Frenchmen in Paris" (2000: 29). Reilly's argument was simple: there were simply too much "anecdotal evidence" about anti-Catholic discrimination to doubt that it was widespread and serious (2000: 31). Of course such elevation of anecdote to 'proof' (reversing the rule of thumb that 'the plural of anecdote is not data') brings profound difficulties of interpretation. Just how many anecdotal claims about a phenomenon, how widespread the perception of it, is required before we *must* assume that there is an underlying and significant social reality? How are we to judge between apparently contradictory anecdotal claims? Anecdote has, of course, its place – people understand their lives, after all, through 'stories' – but the absence of convincing empirical evidence, despite decades of popular and academic interest in sectarianism, casts serious doubt on claims of a Scotland riven by religious discrimination.

Subsequent work by Paterson & Iannelli (2006) utilised the 2001 Scottish Household Survey, one of the first available surveys with a sufficiently large sample size to accommodate robust statistical modelling. They concluded that for those entering employment from the 1950s onwards, there was "no evidence here that, for example, Catholics are widely discriminated against in the labour market, or extensively have to abandon their religion to gain high-status employment" (2006: 368). The underlying reason for this was:

> … essentially the equalizing of educational attainment among religious groups over time. Probably as a result of the academically successful system of Catholic schools, younger Catholics have almost the same distribution of attainment as younger people in other religious groups. That is not the case among older generations. These credentials are then rewarded in the labour market in broadly the same way for all religious groups, regardless of class of origin. In that sense, Catholics have benefited from meritocracy: the schools have given them access to certificates, and the certificates have allowed them to demonstrate their merit in seeking employment and social status.
> Paterson & Iannelli (2006: 374-375)

More recent work by Paterson, Calvin and Deary addresses the "unanswered question … as to when broadly equal opportunity between Catholics and non-Catholics was achieved" (2014:2). Whilst the academic consensus had focussed on the introduction of comprehensive education in the 1960s, Paterson et al utilised the previously unavailable Scottish Mental Survey of 1947 to investigate "whether the equalisation of opportunity may have occurred somewhat earlier" (2014:2). Their analyses suggested that Scotland's "labour market as early as the 1950s was operating meritocratically" in terms of those who had "attended different denominations of school" (2014: 18). They thus conclude that:

> The policy changes that had the largest impact [in terms of educational and employment convergence] may have been those of liberal reformers with an ideology of merit-selection in the period after 1918 rather more than of social-democratic reformers with more egalitarian beliefs after the 1960s.
> Paterson et al, (2014: 18)

Strikingly, in the debate around religion and structural disadvantage little attention has been paid to what the 2001 Census can tell us. The formal report on religion in the Census noted only the overall figures across occupational class and other measures (Office of the Chief Statistician, 2005). Drawing upon these, the Scottish Government's review of evidence on sectarianism noted that "Although now very dated [sic], the 2001 data showed quite clearly that there was little or no difference in the occupations of Catholics and those of the Church of Scotland" (Justice Analytical Services, 2013: 25). Consideration of structural religious disadvantage has often faced two profound and complex limitations. The first is the reproduction and privileging of a 'Protestant/Catholic' dichotomy which does not adequately reflect an increasingly secularised, perhaps post-Christian Scotland (see, e.g., Rosie 2004: 32-39). Secondly, and more complexly, 'bivariate' analyses must be treated with caution given the interplay of religion, class, gender, generation and secularisation.

Put simply, patterns of secularisation are very different for Protestants and Catholics, not least in terms of identity and belonging. As Brown (1997) has noted, the latter part of the twentieth century saw 'a haemorrhage of faith' in Scotland (as elsewhere) with increasing dislocation from formal religious activity, membership and belief. However, this dislocation hit earliest and hardest at liberal Protestant denominations and at the Church of Scotland in particular.

From a high of 1.3 million communicants in 1960, Kirk membership fell below one million by 1980, and 0.7m by 1995. The last 20 years has seen sustained and rapid decline: to 0.5 million by 2005 and below 0.4m by 2013. Between 1990 and 2013 – that is, within a single generation - Kirk membership *halved*. Little of this is explained by a purposeful exodus out of the Kirk – rather it reflects a widespread drift away and a decades-long (and deepening) failure to recruit the young. The outcome of this, over several generations, is arresting.

Table 2 reports how respondents in the Scottish Social Attitudes, broken down across age category, answered the question "do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?" Here we focus only upon the three largest groups – those identifying with the Church of Scotland (representing a very large majority of those we might describe as 'Protestant'), with the Roman Catholic Church, and those who described themselves as being of 'no religion'. Results from the earliest (1999) and latest publicly available (2013) editions are shown to illustrate the rapidly shifting context:

Table 2: Religious belonging by age group, 1999 & 2013

	1999				2013		
	Church of Scotland	**Catholic**	**No religion**		**Church of Scotland**	**Catholic**	**No religion**
ALL	**35**	**14**	**40**		**18**	**13**	**54**
18-24	18	16	56		2	9	77
25-34	19	18	54		5	14	63
35-44	29	14	43		11	15	59
45-54	38	10	45		14	11	57
55-64	47	10	29		24	16	47
65+	52	18	22		42	12	31
N =	*518*	*201*	*590*		*271*	*193*	*802*

Source: SSA 1999; SSA 2013.

The first point to take from table 2 is the quite remarkable decline of overall Church of Scotland identification in a relatively short period (from 35 to 18 per cent), alongside the stability of Catholic identification and a notable increase (from 40 to 54 per cent) in those describing themselves as being of no religion. The second point is even more striking: whilst in 1999 the Church of Scotland profile was highly gradated across age, their 2013 profile suggested nothing short of a collapse amongst all but the oldest category. Whilst it is difficult to clearly identify cohort effects in non-longitudinal data, it does seem likely that the decline in Church of Scotland identification relates not simply to the emergence, and subsequent ageing, of relatively secularised cohorts. Rather, there seems to be some evidence that cohorts may be increasingly discarding their Church of Scotland identification *as* they grow older.

Whatever the complex historical trajectory, the blunt fact is that, in relative terms, very few Scots aged under 45 describe themselves as Church of Scotland. Catholic figures are more variable but do not suggest any such calamitous decline. In all but two age categories in 2013 a majority of Scots were of 'no religion', and amongst the youngest age groups this was a large

majority. In the second oldest age category 'no religion' constituted almost half of the respondents.

Table 2 thus illustrates two crucial points. Firstly, we cannot simply compare religious groups and conclude that any observable differences are 'religious' differences. There would be a strong possibility that such differences may reflect the very distinctive age profiles of the groups. Secondly, restricting any analysis of such data to comparison of the two main religious groups excludes a very substantial proportion of Scots – and *most* young Scots – from consideration.

Given these crucial caveats, do we find much evidence that the 'life chances' of contemporary Scots are shaped by their religion? A useful way to explore this is through the Individual Licenced Sample of Anonymised Records (I-SAR) based on a 3% sample of the 2001 Census[1]. Table 3 reports the occupational classification of the 'Household Reference Person' across the three largest religious groupings in I-SAR 2001:

Table 3: Occupational class of Household Reference Person and religion, 2001

	Church of Scotland	**Catholic**	**No religion**
Higher managerial, administrative and professional	30	30	34
Intermediate occupations	13	13	12
Small employers and own account workers	8	6	7
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	11	10	10
Semi-routine occupations	18	18	17
Routine occupations	15	17	14
Never worked and long-term unemployed	4	7	5
	41,908	15,217	28,310

Source: I-SAR 2001
NB - Authors own recoding of NS-SEC classification[2]

The differences we can observe in table 3 are statistically significant ($p = .000$)[3] but very modest. But the question remains, given the differential impacts of secularisation: might the age structures of the major faith groups matter? For example, whist 60 per cent of all people sampled in I-SA are aged 0-44 years, this proportion rises to 62 per cent amongst Catholics and 75 per cent amongst those of no religion, and falls to 48 per cent amongst those identifying as Church of Scotland. Likewise, seven per cent of the sample overall are aged 75+, but this is lower amongst Catholics (six per cent) and no religion (two per cent), and higher (eleven per cent) amongst Church of Scotland identifiers. In other words the Church of Scotland profile is considerably older (indeed 'elderly') than that of Catholics, which in turn is somewhat older than the profile of those of no religion. What happens to occupational differences when we control for age?

[1] For further information on I-SAR 2001 http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue?sn=7205
[2] On the NS-SEC classification see https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/archives/nssec
[3] It should be noted, of course, that very large sample sizes – as with I-SAR – are likely to show statistical significance for small differences.

The first thing to note is that when we control occupational class for age, we find statistically significant differences between the three key religious groups in seven of eight age categories. Only in the youngest (those aged 16-19) do we find that observable differences are *not* statistically significant (p = .278). But, again, most of the statistically significant differences prove to be very modest indeed. There were 56 possible combinations of class/age (the seven different occupational classes described in table 3 across eight age brackets): the largest differences between the three main religious groups prove to be less than five percentage points in forty-seven of these. The nine categories where we do find a difference of five percentage points or more are reported in table 4.

Table 4 neatly demonstrates several things about occupational class, age group and religion in contemporary Scotland. First, the categories in which we find 'notable' differences (here crudely defined as five or more percentage points between any pairing of the three main religious groups) are relatively scarce – we find such differences in just nine of the 56 possible categories. Secondly it is clear that most of these relatively rare differences are found in the three oldest age brackets. In the 45 possible categories for respondents aged 16-59 we find just two with 'notable' differences: in the 21 possible categories for those aged 60+ we find seven.

Table 4: Categories of difference: Occupational class and religion, 2001

		Church of Scotland	**Catholic**	**No religion**
20-24	Intermediate occupations	18	23	17
45-59	Higher managerial etc.	31	30	40
60-64	Higher managerial etc.	27	23	33
60-64	Semi-routine occupations	19	20	14
65-69	Higher managerial etc.	27	23	32
65-69	Routine occupations	18	24	20
70-74	Higher managerial etc.	22	21	30
70-74	Lower supervisory etc.	14	9	16
70-74	Never worked/long-term unemployed	10	17	10

Source: I-SAR 2001

But a third point is crucial – no consistent pattern of 'winners' and 'losers' is discernible, and often the differences between Church of Scotland and Catholic (as we can also see in Table 3) are more modest than differences between these two groups and people of no religion. Indeed in only four categories do Presbyterian-Catholic differences amount to five or more percentage points. If we were to classify the first three occupational groups (as listed in table 3) as

relatively privileged and the last four as relatively under-privileged, then these notable differences would amount to two cases of relative Catholic privilege over Church of Scotland identifiers, and two of relative Catholic under-privilege.

An apparent pattern of relative privilege for the no religion group - over-represented in the 'highest' occupational categories in four of the age groups - is interesting and should give pause for thought. Much of the discourse on religion and occupational class assumes that it is religion that might shape a person's class position rather than the other way about. In other words, a person's religion is assumed to be independent of their class, but their class may be shaped by their religion (as one example, through discrimination against certain religious minority groups). But it is also possible that the relationship works the other way around, and that occupational class helps shape a person's self-identity. In other words, occupational 'success' or 'failure', mobility or immobility might impact on a person's religious (in)activity and thus how they might choose to describe their religion. Such questions are beyond the capacities of this paper and, in all probability, beyond the existing data, but they indicate important questions about 'causality', and what might underlie the patterns that we observe (on which, see Paterson & Iannelli, 2006).

Life Choices: You Dancin'?

If it is difficult to pinpoint consistent and structured differences across key religious groups in term of 'life chances', might we find evidence of social distance and differentiation in terms of 'life choices'? In other words, do Scots report that the decisions they make across various aspects of their lives are informed, shaped, or limited by their religion? Returning to the 2002 Glasgow study, Table 5 reports how respondents viewed the relevance of their religion to a range of such decisions:

Table 5: Religion and 'life choices' in Glasgow, 2002

Have you ever felt that your religion was relevant to …	**Church of Scotland**	**Catholic**	**No religion**
Who you could have as a friend	4	6	4
Who you could date or marry	10	8	7
What jobs you could apply for	6	13	6
Where you could live	5	8	6
Social clubs you could join	11	22	14
Base	*348*	*288*	*249*

Source: *NFO 2003:* author's own analysis.

Three aspects of table 5 seem particularly noteworthy. Firstly differences between the key groups on some questions are fairly modest. Relatively few Glaswegians, for example, felt that their religion shaped where they could live or who they could befriend. These 2002 results chime well with the evidence from the 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes which found that very

large majorities of Catholics (81 per cent) and Protestants (76 per cent) could count at least one person from the 'other' religion as a close friend (Hinchliffe et al, 2015: 13).

Secondly, where we do find differences a simplistic reading is difficult to sustain. For example we might be struck by the difference between the six per cent of Church of Scotland identifiers and the 13 per cent of Catholics who felt their religion was relevant to the jobs they could apply for. Yet – though not shown in table – the fact that 14 per cent of 'other Christians' also felt this makes an easy assumption of Protestant-Catholic difference difficult to sustain. Likewise though 22 per cent of Catholics reported that their religion was relevant to which social clubs they could join, this was also the case for 21 per cent of 'other Christians' and 20 per cent from 'other religions'.

Thirdly, religious inter-marriage and intimate relationships did not seem particularly problematic. Across the three key religious groups most Glaswegians did not report that their religion was relevant to who they could date or marry. Likewise whilst some in the Glasgow study who were themselves in a mixed religion relationship reported adverse reactions to them crossing the supposed 'divide', these tended to be a relatively modest minority. Table 6 defines 'disapproval' of a mixed religion relationship very widely as encompassing reports that others disapproved 'a little', 'quite a lot', and 'a great deal'. Even such a broad definition of disapproval fails to find evidence that most people entering mixed relationships face substantial difficulties. There is some evidence that Protestant-Catholic relationships face a little more disapproval (in particular from one's family and from the Churches) than other kinds of mixed religion relationship. However, this must be tempered by the fact that the vast majority of respondents across all categories – at least 82 per cent – did not report any no disapproval to their relationship:

Table 6: Disapproval of mixed religion relationships, Glasgow, 2002

(% describing disapproval on the part of:)	In **Protestant-Catholic** relationship	All **other mixed religion** relationships
Friends	2	2
Partner's friends	3	3
Family	17	10
Partner's family	14	13
Church/religion	10	7
Partner's Church/religion	18	8
Base	*99*	*127*

Source: *NFO 2003:* author's own analysis.

We can approach such intimate questions not simply through what people *say* about themselves, but through what they *do*. The 2001 Census allowed us an unparalleled opportunity to measure the extent of mixed religious marriage in Scotland. Fascinating and advanced analysis can be found in Raab & Holligan (2012) – for our purposes, here, however, the broad patterns will suffice since they are immensely revealing.

The extent of religiously mixed marriages and relationships in the 2001 Census demonstrates that any human boundaries between religious traditions are highly permeable at even this most intimate level. As table 7 shows, the 2001 Census recorded almost 400,000 Scottish Catholics who were living with a spouse or partner. In almost half these cases (47 per cent) that spouse/partner was *not* Catholic. More than a quarter of Catholics (27%) were married to, or cohabiting with, a Protestant:

Table 7: Catholics and mixed marriages/relationships, 2001

CATHOLICS	**MARRIED**	**COHABITING**	
Religion of Partner:	%	%	**TOTAL**
None	13.4	28.9	17.1
Church of Scotland	22.0	29.2	23.7
Roman Catholic	59.4	33.9	53.3
Other Christian	3.4	4.7	3.7
Another Religion	0.2	0.9	0.3
Not Answered	1.4	2.5	1.7
	299,190	*93,488*	*392,678*

Source: Census of Scotland, 2001 – author's own analysis.

These data hardly indicate the existence of carefully bounded and patrolled religious communities – Catholics are very likely to find their life-partner outside the faith, and the fact that this is even more marked amongst those who are cohabiting suggests that exogamy amongst younger Catholics is remarkably high.

How do Scotland's Catholics compare with their neighbours? Table 8 reports the rate of endogamy (i.e. in-group marriage) amongst a range of religions across Scotland as a whole, and within Glasgow. Here, for ease of presentation, only marriages (and not cohabitations) are shown. Two religious groups show markedly high rates of in-marriage, with most married Muslims (89 per cent across Scotland) and Sikhs (86 per cent) married to a person of the same faith:

Table 8: Extent of religious endogamy, Scotland & Glasgow, 2001 (selected religions)

% married to spouse of same religion	**None**	**Church of Scotland**	**Catholic**	**Hindu**	**Jewish**	**Muslim**	**Sikh**
Scotland	67.4	81.3	59.4	81.6	71.3	88.7	86.1
Glasgow	65.1	75.3	68.8	85.7	62.2	93.0	91.1

Source: Census of Scotland, 2001 – author's own analysis.

By sharp contrast Church of Scotland identifiers and Catholics are much more likely to marry outwith their religious group. Despite widespread assumptions of a 'sectarian divide' between Scotland's – and in particular Greater Glasgow's – Protestants and Catholics, the Census reveals that around one-third of Glasgow's Catholics and one quarter of Church of Scotland identifiers have 'married out'. That the Glasgow rate of out-marriage amongst Catholics is lower than in Scotland as a whole reflects the greater concentration of Catholics in west central Scotland. In short, if a Glasgow Catholic were to *randomly* select a fellow Glaswegian as a marital partner they would be more likely to marry a fellow Catholic than would be the case for, say, Catholics in Aberdeen or Inverness. That springs from the simple fact that there were proportionately far more Catholics in Glasgow in the 2001 Census (29 per cent) than in Aberdeen (6 per cent) or Inverness (8 per cent). The reverse demographic pattern will, in part, explain the lower relative rate of Church of Scotland endogamy in Glasgow than in Scotland as a whole.

Previous studies[4] have suggested that Protestants and Catholics (and, indeed, the irreligious) are very like each other in terms of their political and social attitudes, and to a large extent we now know why. The Census data on intermarriage, alongside the evidence noted above on friendship networks, serve to signal that religious communities are not discrete and bounded entities inhabiting separate social worlds. The boundaries between religious groups may be very porous indeed, and 'different' communities may be connected by, and within individual life histories, friendship networks, families and life partners. Religious conflict with 'the Other' – indeed the very conception and relevance *of* 'Other' – becomes difficult to sustain when it is one's partner, father, sister, or child who 'kicks with the other foot'. Neither is intermarriage a recent phenomenon. Bernard Aspinwall (2000: 56) found:

> … surprising numbers of mixed marriages from the nineteenth century to the present. Even if a number of these were between marginal or lukewarm Catholics and nominal Protestants, such evidence undermines hitherto unquestioned assumptions about a prevalent feverish bigotry until recent times. My discussions with elderly [Catholic] faithful invariably reveal surprising numbers of mixed marriages and Protestant relations in their forefathers' backgrounds. A curious, selective amnesia prevails in our interpretation of our past.

Conclusion

In the 1980s and 1990s the problem with 'sectarianism' from a sociological perspective was the relative lack of empirical data with which to gauge its prevalence. The problem from the 2000s onwards was to explain the increasingly apparent divide between perceptions of sectarianism and experience of it. Some tentative answers have been hinted at here. Sectarianism, like crime, is a 'bad thing' which individuals are wary of. Like crime, sectarianism looms rather larger in most people's imaginations than in most people's actual experience. A generation ago, Bruce (1988: 151) argued that 'the relatively rare public displays of sectarian animosity are not the visible tip of a submerged mass of ice but are rather all that is left'. Since then the emerging empirical evidence – soon to be augmented by further releases from the 2011 Census - has largely bolstered Bruce's view about the 'sectarian iceberg'.

[4] See, e.g., McCrone & Rosie, 1998; Rosie & McCrone, 2000; I. Paterson, 2000; Bruce et al, 2004; Rosie, 2004, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c.

Whatever the position in the past (on which detailed historical study is surprisingly limited), it is now clear that in terms of key *life chances*– access to education, to jobs, to opportunities for social mobility – there is little evidence of significant, let alone systematic, differences between Protestants, Catholics and the irreligious. Additionally, sectarianism does not seem to be a shaping, let alone a determining, factor in *life choices* – a person's political and social values, networks of friends and family, and choice of romantic partner. By and large, Scotland's Protestants and Catholics think and act like each other, and indeed live, work and make babies together, rather more than the truisms around 'sectarianism' would suggest.

Nevertheless whatever the empirical evidence relating to the 'iceberg', it seems clear that many Scots are genuinely worried about sectarianism, its prevalence, and its impact. Perceptions, in other words, *matter*. The research detailed elsewhere in this Special Issue points towards how sectarianism (whether in terms of generalised anxiety or actual lived experience) impacts upon real lives and real communities. The Scottish Government has provided key leadership in unpacking sectarianism so that we can understand and tackle it. Other public bodies too (not least the Police and the Courts) have played a leading role in addressing some of the more explicit manifestations of sectarian misbehaviour. In its Interim Report, AGoTS noted that elsewhere in Scottish life there was often a dispiriting lack of leadership, and called for more confidence in tackling sectarianism. Such confident leadership, at the very least, would help to tackle the widespread social anxiety over sectarianism in contemporary Scotland:

> Those in positions of responsibility, including those in organisations and institutions where sectarianism has played a historic role - such as the churches, local authorities, football clubs, public services, the professions, journalism, schools, parading organisations, community organisations and youth services - should develop pro-active, visible and sustainable approaches to identify and address both persistent and residual sectarianism in their organisations, communities and areas of influence.
> (AGoTS, 2103: 5)

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